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GOVERNOR



STATE OF MICHIGAN
LANSING

JAMIE CLOVER ADAMS
DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT

KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

KIRK T. STEUDLE
DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

August 27, 2012

Ms. Susan Hedman, Regional Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard, Mail Code R-19J
Chicago, Illinois 60605-3590

Dear Ms. Hedman:

We are writing to express our collective support for the pending state and federal permit application No. 11-52-0075P for the construction of County Road 595 in Marquette County, Michigan. We understand this project is in the final stage of joint agency deliberations, and has been reviewed and modified to accommodate environmental concerns at multiple levels pursuant to joint statutory authorities which are administered by state and federal agencies.

The following reasons outline the rationale and findings for our support. They are based upon the revisions requested by both the state and federal agency's permit review teams and recently submitted by the applicant.

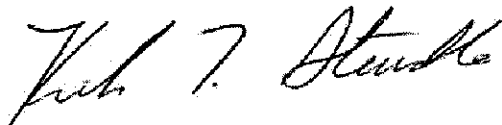
A new primary county road in this proposed location is determined to benefit the public interest by providing a more direct and improved route of access to northwest sections of Marquette County. This would shorten haul distances for transporting mine ore, aggregate, and logging products to existing product processing centers. In addition, it would reduce heavy truck traffic in more populated areas, as well as travel distances for affected employees reporting to employment locations. The proposed new county primary road would also address a key public safety benefit by providing increased efficiencies and significant improvements in safety response times for emergency services to northwestern Marquette County. This also responds to a private and public need for improved year-round access to recreational lands held in both private and public ownership along this route. These benefits would be realized by all of Marquette County citizens, and visitors alike, thereby allowing for more efficient rural development opportunities.

The applicant has also agreed to work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) concerning their wildlife concerns by jointly developing a plan that addresses the need for both habitat replacement and wildlife travel corridor specifics. Pursuant to MDNR's request to limit the building or connection of secondary roads in critical habitat areas, the applicant will utilize placement of conservation easements, deed restrictions, or purchasing land. Additional concerns agreed upon for mitigation include surveying for invasive species, along all areas that were disturbed during construction. Any invasive species will be removed or treated with herbicide.

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After reviewing the initial application, along with the subsequent additional and mitigation measures agreed upon by the applicant, we are in concurrence that this project is viable and meets our requirements. In our opinion, the public benefits achieved from permitting the construction of County Road 595 would clearly outweigh the resource impacts involved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirk T. Steudle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kirk" being the most prominent.

Kirk T. Steudle, Director
Michigan Department of Transportation

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Keith Creagh". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Keith" being the most prominent.

Keith Creagh, Director
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jamie Clover Adams". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Jamie" being the most prominent.

Jamie Clover Adams, Director
Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development